

Request for Qualifications & Bid

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) is seeking qualifications and a bid from firms to conduct a comprehensive plan for Historic Jefferson College (HJC) in Washington, Mississippi.

Schedule

RFQ and bid request issued September 7, 2021
Questions submitted September 15, 2021, 5 p.m. CDST
Answers provided September 22, 2021, 5 p.m. CDST
Submittals due October 1, 2021, 12 p.m. CDST
Project awarded November 1, 2021
Project completed April 15, 2022

Background

MDAH assumed ownership of Jefferson College in 1971 and conducted two restorations in 1977 and 1984. The site officially opened to the public as Historic Jefferson College in 1977 with interpretation focusing on the history of the school—the first institution of higher learning in Mississippi—that was chartered in 1802 and operated in various capacities until 1964. HJC is also known as the birthplace of statehood, as delegates wrote Mississippi's first constitution in a church on the campus in 1817. The site featured eight buildings, a visitor center with gift shop, and nature trails. Due to poor visitation and the deteriorating condition of the buildings, MDAH closed the site on June 30, 2019.

Vision

MDAH has plans to reopen Historic Jefferson College as a gateway to Natchez museum. Planning for an exterior restoration of the historic buildings on campus is underway. MDAH is ready to develop a new comprehensive plan. Our interpretive idea is to focus on the development and immense growth of the cotton kingdom in the region with its reliance on the institution of slavery.

This work at HJC is part of larger initiative as MDAH is working with regional partners to tell a broader story and reach a wider audience. MDAH has undertaken a project to stabilize the columns at nearby Windsor Ruins and is raising funds to build a new museum at Grand Village of the Natchez Indians, a National Historic Landmark mound site. New interpretation and promotion will increase visitation at both of these sites. The National Park Service is improving sites in the region including the Forks of the Road slave market and Vicksburg National Military Park and is studying the possibility of establishing a new park comprising civil rights sites throughout Mississippi.

MDAH has partnered with the Historic Natchez Foundation to conduct an architectural survey of 19th-century outbuildings (primarily slave quarters) throughout Adams County. This survey will provide a rich source of information on the lives and work of enslaved people in this area. From this information, we can develop exhibits, programs, educational materials, and other resources broadening and enriching our perspective on the history of Natchez and Adams County.

Through these related initiatives (paired with the success of the new Museum of Mississippi History and Mississippi Civil Rights Museum in Jackson), southwest Mississippi is poised to become a national center for study and heritage tourism. You cannot understand American history without understanding Mississippi's stories, and you cannot understand Mississippi's stories unless you experience them in person.

Expectations

MDAH seeks qualifications for a firm to complete a comprehensive plan for a newly restored site with new exhibits and interpretation. The plan should take into account the entire site (all 8 buildings), the subject matter of the exhibits, and include the following components:

- Community Needs Assessment determined through public meetings
- Development of new name for site, and vision and mission statement
- Exhibit space recommendations
- Exhibit topics with preliminary layout
- Estimate of exhibit cost and schedule
- Visitor flow ideas for entire site
- Exterior signage topics
- Economic Impact
- Staffing plan
- Programming ideas
- Other uses for the site (event rentals, store, etc.)

Evaluation Committee

The evaluation committee will consist of five MDAH staff members involved in the project.

Evaluation Criteria

Qualifications will be evaluated for a possible total of 100 points on the following information:

- Experience of work at historic site with multiple buildings and/or subject matter
- Resumes of individuals assigned to the project
- References of related work
- Size of the company
- Cost of bid

Bids will be reviewed only for those firms who are scored as qualified by the committee.

Questions:

Submit all questions by email to hjcplan@mdah.ms.gov . The deadline for submitting questions is 5 p.m. central time on Monday, September 15, 2021. Responses to all questions submitted will be posted to the website <https://www.mdah.ms.gov/hjc-comprehensive-plan-rfq> by 5 p.m. central time on Friday, September 22, 2021.

Submittals

One hard copy and 5 USBs should be submitted with requested information. ***Bids are to be submitted in a separate sealed envelope (only one copy needed).***

Address to:

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Response to RFQ # 3120002310 (HJC RFQ & Bid)

Attention: Joey Roberts

Mississippi Department of Archives & History

200 North Street

Jackson, MS 39201

The deadline for all submissions is noon central time on Friday, October 1, 2021.